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Codeword

Weekly Situation Report on International Terrorism

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30 November 1976

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Guatemalan Guerrilla Group Occupies American Oil Camp

On 26 November approximately 25 men and women belonging to the Guatemalan Guerrilla Army of the Poor (EGP) occupied a field camp of the American Shenandoah Oil Company located in northern Guatemala near the Mexican border. The EGP entered and took control of the site early in the morning while company employees were still asleep. The guerrillas were armed with rifles and other weapons. Two hours later a Guatemalan air force helicopter, used by Shenandoah to resupply its field camps, unexpectedly arrived and began to land even though radio contact with the camp had been broken. The guerrillas waited until the helicopter was almost on the ground, then opened fire and forced it to finish landing. One of the craft's three crew members was slightly injured, the only casualty in the incident.

Shortly after the arrival of the helicopter, the EGP group separated the Guatemalan and American employees and began a propaganda indoctrination session which was interrupted some time later by a second helicopter, sent by the Shenandoah base camp when it was unable to contact the first helicopter. This helicopter was fired upon and slightly damaged, but managed to escape and land at a small village about ten miles away. From this location government troops were contacted and yet another helicopter, this time carrying troops with orders to capture the guerrillas, was dispatched to the field camp. However, owing to the delay in the arrival of the troops, the guerrillas had time to destroy the first helicopter and the camp radio, then steal food supplies, a radio, and a camera before making a clean escape.

This is the second instance when EGP members have occupied a Shenandoah field camp for a limited period of time, then escaped without injuring camp members or being injured themselves. The first instance occurred during the summer of 1975.

The commander of the first helicopter, a lieutenant colonel in the Guatemalan air force, said he believed that three of the guerrillas were Americans and one was a Cuban, judging from accents and insignia. However, there is no proof that any but Guatemalan terrorists were involved in

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this incident. The Guatemalan government has sent two companies of troops to patrol and protect the area.

The EGP grew out of one of the small terrorist splinter groups that once formed the Revolutionary Armed Forces, Rebelde faction, in the late 1960's and early 1970's. The EGP is a leftist, terrorist organization whose strength is currently estimated to be over 100 members, and it is still growing. Led by Julio Cesar Macias Mayora, alias Cesar Montes, the EGP has been credited with political assassinations, firebombings, and robberies in both rural and urban areas of Guatemala.

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CHRONOLOGY OF SIGNIFICANT INTERNATIONAL TERRORIST ACTS

Date: 26 November 1976

Place: Guatemala

Guatemalan Terrorists Occupy U.S.-owned Oil Company Camp

Approximately 25-50 members of the Guatemalan Army of the Poor (EGP) terrorist group temporarily occupied a U.S.-owned and manned drilling camp of the Shenandoah Oil Company in northwestern Guatemala on 26 November. The guerrillas seized the Guatemalan and American staff at the camp and fired on a Guatemalan Air Force helicopter which appeared on the scene, wounding one of the crew. Upon the arrival of a second helicopter, the terrorists released their captives and fled. (See Articles.)

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